

February 16, 1968

Dr. Jak H. Mendelson  
Chief, National Center for Prevention  
and Control of Alcoholism,  
National Institute of Mental Health  
5454 Wisconsin Avenue  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20203

Dear Dr. Mendelson:

The enclosed clipping on robins consuming fermented pyracantha berries is about the only documentation I have been able to find on this natural phenomenon. I am sure I have also read recurrent reports of this sort of thing from spring to spring, in the New York Times, but have not been able to find them, nor has a rather limited search turned up any scientific literature on the subject.

I did talk to the Mr. Dan Clark who is mentioned in the Palo Alto Times article, and found this very entertaining but not particularly useful from the point of view of natural history.

We were both readily able to exchange reminiscences about a pet dog and pet cat, respectively, who had both developed a taste for one specific alcoholic beverage, namely cognac. The alcohol conceivably might be incidental, but perhaps that observation should not be dismissed too hastily.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

J. MENDELSON